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Dear *Permission to be Powerful* Reader,

There are some stories that haunt you forever.

Stories that shatter the illusion that childhood is a time of innocence and protection...

Some children are born into nightmares.



Where the people meant to protect them are the ones who hurt them the most.

Where survival isn't about scraped knees or childhood fears, but about enduring **unspeakable cruelty**.

These are the worst cases of child abuse ever documented. And once you know them, you can't unsee them.

A child is born helpless, trusting, and wired to love.

But when abuse takes its place, the damage runs deep—twisting their sense of reality, self-worth, and even their ability to survive.

Child psychologist Erik Erikson argued that a child's earliest experiences shape their entire life.

If the first thing a child learns is fear instead of love, that fear never truly leaves.

☞ They learn to please the very people who harm them.'

☞ They learn that their pain is invisible—that no one is coming to save them.

☞ They learn that survival means obeying, no matter the cost.

For some children, abuse isn't a single event—it's **a way of life**.

Dave Pelzer's mother didn't just beat him—she erased his humanity.

In A Child Called It, Pelzer describes how his mother singled him out among his siblings, subjecting him to years of torture disguised as discipline:

- ☞ He was starved for days, forced to eat scraps and dig through trash to survive.
- ☞ He was locked in a bathroom filled with ammonia, unable to breathe.
- ☞ He was stabbed in the stomach—and forced to keep doing chores while bleeding.
- ☞ He was called "It" instead of his name, as if he wasn't even a person.

Pelzer's survival instincts became razor-sharp.

Crying only made things worse.

The key to survival was predicting his mother's moods and finding ways to outthink her brutality.

But the most horrifying part? **People knew.**

Teachers saw the bruises. They saw him steal food. They asked questions. And still, **for years, no one did anything.**

Because the worst child abuse isn't just about the monster in the house. It's about the **entire system that allows it to happen.**

The child protection system exists to protect the vulnerable.

But what happens when it does the opposite?

One of the most heartbreaking cases involved a **baby boy taken from his drug-addicted mother at birth.**

For four years, he was raised by a **loving foster family**—a couple who cherished him like their own. But when they applied to **formally adopt**

him, his birth mother—who had **already lost custody of four other children**—challenged it in court.

And the court **gave him back to her**.

Six months later, she was **back in prison for drug use**. But instead of returning him to the only family he had ever known, Child Protection refused, saying he needed to be “emotionally available” for his birth mother when she was released.

What followed was a childhood of chaos:

- ☞ He was shuffled through foster homes that never lasted.
- ☞ He learned that no one stays, no one loves, and no one is safe.
- ☞ He ended up in juvenile detention before disappearing into the system.

His **original foster parents quit fostering entirely**, broken by the system’s failure.

Because sometimes, **the worst abuse isn’t what happens behind closed doors—it’s what happens in plain sight, sanctioned by law**.

Some cases defy belief.

They are so depraved, so inhuman, that they leave you questioning what kind of world we live in.

A little girl, only four years old, was rushed to the hospital—bleeding to death.

Someone had cut off her genitals and left her to die in a public bathroom.

No one ever came to claim her.
No one ever reported her missing.
It's suspected she had been **trafficked and mutilated for ritual sacrifice**.

Her identity remains unknown.

A woman in **Nigeria** placed a bet—and lost.

She had no money to pay.

So she **left her 4-year-old son at the betting shop and disappeared**.

The child **screamed for his mother**, but she never returned. He was found by police, abandoned, confused, and heartbroken.

His own mother had **used him as currency**.

In Germany, a 9-year-old boy was sold on the dark web by his own mother.

She and her boyfriend **sexually abused him, tortured him, and sold access to him to pedophiles**.

When police finally raided their home, they discovered video evidence of **hundreds of acts of abuse**—a horrifying catalog of suffering.

His mother? She didn't just allow it.
She **profited from it**.

And this case?

It's not the only one.

The patterns in these stories reveal the terrifying reality of abuse:

1. The Abuser's Mindset

- Many abusers were **abused themselves**—but not all.
- Some do it to **feel power**.
- Some do it to **control and dominate**.
- Some genuinely believe their actions are “**discipline**”.

2. The Silent Bystanders

Most child abuse **doesn't happen in total secrecy**.

- ☞ Teachers see the bruises.
- ☞ Neighbors hear the screams.
- ☞ Family members suspect something is wrong.

And yet—**so often, nothing is done**.

Why?

- ☞ **Fear of being wrong.**
- ☞ **Not wanting to get involved.**
- ☞ **Believing it's “none of their business.”**

And so, children are left to fend for themselves—often until it's too late.

If these stories make you angry, good.

If they make you sick, even better.

Because that means you're awake.

- ☞ **Pay attention.**

- If a child is always **hungry, withdrawn, covered in bruises, or acting out**—something is wrong.

☞ Don't hesitate.

- If you suspect abuse, **report it**. It's better to be wrong than to ignore a child in danger.

☞ Support survivors.

- The effects of abuse **last a lifetime**—but support, therapy, and validation can help them heal.

And most importantly?

☞ Never assume “someone else” will step in.

Because if everyone assumes that, **no one does**.

And that's how these stories happen.

Child abuse cases often reveal the **monstrous cruelty of parents**—but some take that horror to an unimaginable extreme.

One of the most chilling cases in recent history is that of Chad Doerman...

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The Ohio father who executed his three young sons in cold blood.

According to prosecutors, Doerman had been planning the murders for months.

On June 15, 2023, he finally carried out his nightmarish plan.

☞ He shot one son while he was sleeping.

☞ He chased down another who tried to flee and executed him in a field.

☞ He killed the youngest while his mother and sister desperately tried to stop him.

His wife—who was shot in the hand while trying to protect the children—called 911, **screaming that her babies had been shot.**

A passerby saw Doerman's **12-year-old stepdaughter running down the street**, shouting that her father was killing everyone.

And when police arrived?

They found Doerman calmly sitting on his porch, as if he had just taken out the trash.

In his confession, Doerman revealed that he had been **obsessed with the idea of killing his sons** since **October 2022.**

He told authorities that **the thoughts consumed him**, keeping him awake for days before the murders.

On the day of the killings, he **read the Bible** to his children and **told them they were the best boys ever**—before pulling the trigger.

It wasn't a crime of passion.

It wasn't an accident.

It was a **premeditated execution**—by the one person who was supposed to protect them.

Filicide—

The act of a parent murdering their child...Is one of the most heinous crimes.

It happens more often than you'd think.

- ☞ Some do it because they see their children as an extension of themselves—and in their deluded minds, "ending" them is a form of control.
- ☞ Some do it because they are overcome with rage or mental illness—believing their children are better off dead.
- ☞ Some, like Doerman, plan it for months—obsessing over the act, to the point where it becomes their reality.

In many cases, the warning signs are there.

- **Doerman's wife sensed something was wrong**—but never imagined he would actually do it.
- **He told police he hadn't slept for days**, tormented by his own thoughts.
- **His daughter tried to warn people**—but it was already too late.

Doerman was sentenced to **three consecutive life terms in prison**, sparing the family the agony of a trial.

But for the boys' mother? There is no closure.

In a heartbreaking statement, she said:

♥ “I would do anything to push them on the swing one more time. To cover them up and hear them say ‘I love you.’”

She now lives with **a grief that will never fade**—a love for her sons that has nowhere to go.

The Doerman case is a **horrifying example of how abuse can escalate into the unthinkable.**

☞ If someone talks about harming their children, take it seriously.

☞ If someone becomes consumed by dark thoughts, intervene before it's too late.

☞ If you sense that something is terribly wrong, don't assume it's just in your head.

Because sometimes, the worst monsters aren't lurking in the shadows—they're sitting at the family dinner table.

The cases we've explored so far reveal a **horrifying truth**—some parents are monsters.

But what happens when entire societies enable the abuse?

Some of the **worst cases of child abuse in history weren't hidden behind closed doors**—they were systematic, organized, and in some cases, **deliberate.**

In 2017, a mass grave was discovered on the grounds of the **Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Ireland**—a home run by Catholic nuns for “fallen women.”

What was inside?

The bodies of nearly 800 babies and children.

For decades, unwed mothers who gave birth at this institution had their babies taken from them. Many died due to **neglect, malnutrition, and abuse**, their tiny bodies dumped in a mass grave—unmarked, unnamed, and forgotten.

No one spoke up.
No one stopped it.

It wasn't until decades later that survivors and relatives forced an investigation, uncovering the horrific **systemic abuse of generations of children**—all sanctioned under the guise of “moral purity.”

And Tuam? **It wasn't the only one.**

Across Ireland, thousands of children were subjected to horrific abuse in institutions run by religious organizations—beaten, starved, exploited for labor, and sexually abused.

They weren't just forgotten.
They were erased.

For decades, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by warlord Joseph Kony, abducted tens of thousands of children from villages across Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- ☞ **Boys were forced to become soldiers.**
- ☞ **Girls were turned into sex slaves.**
- ☞ **Children were forced to kill their own families—to ensure they had nowhere to return to.**

Those who refused?

They were tortured or executed in front of others.

Some were as young as **five years old**.

Even today, many of these children—now adults—**struggle to heal from the horrors they endured.**

Some were **brainwashed into becoming killers**, others **carry the weight of atrocities they were forced to commit.**

The world knew.

And yet, for decades, no one intervened.

In the **United States, Canada, and Australia**, government-backed programs forcibly removed **hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children** from their families.

They were placed in **residential schools**, where they were:

- ☞ Beaten for speaking their native languages
- ☞ Sexually abused by priests and teachers
- ☞ Denied food, proper medical care, and dignity
- ☞ Told their cultures, identities, and even names were “evil”

Many children died in these schools—from neglect, disease, and abuse.

Their families were **never told what happened to them.**

Mass graves of Indigenous children have **been discovered on the grounds of these schools**—proof of a **systemic attempt to erase entire cultures**

through child abuse.

These weren't isolated incidents.

These were **policies**.

Governments.

Churches.

Societies.

All complicit.

Some of the **worst atrocities in history** weren't committed by a single abuser behind closed doors.

They were committed **by entire institutions**—with the world watching.

- ☞ How many people knew about Tuam and said nothing?
- ☞ How many world leaders ignored the child soldiers of Uganda?
- ☞ How many governments justified stealing Indigenous children “for their own good”?

The truth is chilling:

Some of the worst cases of child abuse aren't secrets.

They're known.

And they continue—because **not enough people fight to stop them.**

It's easy to look at **one abuser** and call them a monster.

But what about when **an entire system is designed to break children?**

What about when **entire governments** justify abuse as “discipline” or “policy”?

Some of these stories are **history**. Some of them are **happening right now**.

So the question isn't just:
How does this happen?

The real question is:

How much longer will we allow it?

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist.



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